

**REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
GSA E-GOV TRAVEL
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT OFFICE
REPORT NUMBER A050178/F/A/V06002**

MARCH 6, 2006

Date: March 6, 2006

Reply to
Attn of: Carolyn Presley-Doss
Audit Manager, Acquisition Programs Audit Office (JA-A)

Subject: Review of the Effectiveness of the GSA E-Gov Travel Program Management Office
Report Number A050178/F/A/V06002

To: G. Martin Wagner
Acting Commissioner, Federal Supply Service (F)

Background

The President's Management Agenda (PMA) focuses on improving management within five areas of the Federal government, one of which is Expanded Electronic Government (E-Gov). E-Gov Travel, one of the 25 E-Gov initiatives, was launched in April 2002 to reengineer the Federal government's travel process to realize significant cost savings, efficiencies, and increased service. The initiative promises a government-wide travel transformation that will fundamentally revolutionize the way the Federal government manages travel.

Over the years, agencies have developed numerous expensive in-house travel systems that have inconsistent, redundant, and labor-intensive processes and procedures. These systems are slow, fragmented, and expensive to maintain, with varying levels of compliance with federal requirements and regulations. The goal of the E-Gov Travel Initiative (previously called the eTravel Initiative) is to replace the existing stove-piped travel management systems within agencies and provide a government-wide web-based service that standardizes, automates, and consolidates the Federal government's travel process. The initiative is a collaborative [E-Gov Travel Program Management Office and customer agencies] program designed to improve cost effectiveness and customer satisfaction while leveraging administrative, financial and information technology best practices. Agencies were advised to view the E-Gov Travel Initiative as an investment in change management to encourage a cultural shift toward using a common, end-to-end travel solution. General Services Administration (GSA) was designated Managing Partner for the initiative and in March 2002, the E-Gov Travel Program Management Office (PMO) was established within GSA to centrally manage the initiative and its travel process reengineering efforts. The PMO was also tasked with facilitating knowledge sharing and best practice exchange among the agencies in support of their individual implementation efforts. GSA is subject to oversight from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), portfolio manager for the E-Gov Travel Initiative. External communication and decision-making channels for the initiative incorporate direct consultation with OMB.

In November 2003, the PMO awarded contracts to CW Government Travel Inc (CWGT), Electronic Data Systems Corporation (EDS), and Northrop Grumman Mission Systems (NGMS) to provide an E-Gov Travel Service (ETS). A January 2004 amendment to the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) required agencies to submit an ETS migration plan to the PMO by March 31, 2004, award a task order to an ETS vendor by December 2004, and reach full deployment by September 30, 2006. As of September 2005, 23 agencies have signed task orders with ETS vendors and seven agencies have begun using ETS. As stated in the E-Gov Travel Initiative business case as of September 2005,

funding for the PMO has been provided both through the GSA Federal Supply Service's General Supply Fund and the GSA Industrial Funding Fee (IFF), with the expectation that the PMO will be entirely self-sustaining by the end of FY07 via the IFF.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objectives were to address the following questions:

How is GSA providing adequate oversight and management over the E-Gov Travel Program?

- Is GSA adequately assisting agencies to accomplish established milestones and timeframes?
- Are risks identified and mitigation strategies implemented?
- Is GSA meeting its E-Gov Travel Program performance measures?

To accomplish our audit objectives, we reviewed relevant Federal Travel Regulations and GSA Orders; eTravel Project Charter; E-Gov Travel Initiative business case obtained from the Electronic Capital Planning and Investment Control application as of September 2005; applicable President's Management Agenda information; templates, guidance, and tools developed by the PMO to assist customer agencies; E-Gov Travel Initiative performance measure data; July 2005 and October 2005 issue tracking logs; voucher tracking data maintained by the PMO; Semi-Annual Performance Reviews covering the period December 2004 to June 2005 for each ETS vendor; and ETS Vendor User Group and eTravel Management Advisory Board meeting minutes. Our assessment was limited to the 24 Business Reference Model (BRM) agencies participating in the E-Gov Travel Initiative. See Appendix A-1 for a list of the 24 BRM agencies.

Additionally, we judgmentally selected a sample of five BRM agencies to review in detail, ensuring that each ETS vendor and PMO Customer Service Representative (CSR) was represented in the sample and that agencies with varying sizes of travel spending budgets were included. We conducted interviews with the CSR assigned to each customer agency in our sample to discuss deployment status, risks and obstacles to the agency's deployment schedule, and the PMO's role in mitigating the impact of delays. For each agency in our sample, we obtained ETS migration schedules and plans and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with associated project schedule and agency voucher commitment attachments.

Our review was conducted within GSA's E-Gov Travel Program Management Office and also included customer survey interviews with GSA Office of the Chief Financial Officer staff responsible for implementing E-Gov Travel for GSA. Audit work was performed between May 2005 and November 2005 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Results of Review

The E-Gov Travel Program Management Office has developed and implemented several effective management practices to provide adequate oversight over the E-Gov Travel Initiative and support agencies in transitioning to ETS. Having a CSR dedicated to specific agencies to serve as a customer service focal point has enabled efficient communication with agencies. The PMO created ETS Vendor User Groups to facilitate discussion between ETS vendors, customer agencies, and the PMO about common requirements and issues affecting agencies. An ETS Vendor User Group website was developed to give agencies centralized access to E-Gov Travel information, essential documents, and lessons learned. Additionally, documentation such as an agency communications plan template, ETS pricing and ordering guides, and agency budget templates were prepared by the PMO to aid agencies in their transition to ETS.

Although the PMO has achieved some success in their oversight and management of the E-Gov Travel Initiative, our review disclosed that cost, schedule, and performance risks exist. The PMO has faced challenges in supporting agencies to meet established milestones and timeframes, delaying the accomplishment of the President's Management Agenda goals. Many agencies have experienced significant deployment schedule slippage, resulting in IFF revenue shortfalls and the inability to meet E-Gov Travel Initiative performance measures. Various factors affecting the ability of ETS vendors and agencies to remain on schedule have impacted the PMO's effectiveness in managing the initiative. In order for the PMO to successfully provide adequate management and oversight over the E-Gov Travel Initiative, realistic IFF revenue estimates with a contingency plan to address revenue shortfalls, better estimation and substantiation of deployment timeframes, and more effective issue resolution are needed, thereby helping to mitigate cost, schedule, and performance risks.

Cost

The E-Gov Travel Initiative has experienced significant shortfalls in FY05 Industrial Funding Fee revenues and is projecting a similar outcome in FY06. If current trends continue, the PMO will not meet its expectation of achieving a self-sustained level of operation by the end of FY07. As a result, funding risks exist and additional funding may be needed.

The PMO is funded partially through the IFF revenues generated by every travel voucher processed through ETS. For FY05, the number of vouchers processed through ETS was considerably less than originally planned. The impact of deployment delays on ETS usage rates is twofold - the number of BRM agencies currently using ETS is almost half of what was expected and those agencies that are actually using the system are not meeting their anticipated voucher levels. Based on our review of the PMO's voucher tracking data, the forecasted FY05 voucher levels for the five agencies in our sample totaled over 50,000 while actual vouchers processed for our sample agencies totaled fewer than 16,000. Fewer voucher transactions equates to a smaller amount of IFF revenue generated.

Our review showed that IFF revenue shortfalls would most likely continue to impact E-Gov Travel funding in the upcoming fiscal years. Per the E-Gov Travel Initiative business case as of September 2005, the PMO requested more than \$3 million over the original baseline for FY06 to help maintain the government employee and contractor support levels required to manage delays in deployment. Although the PMO is taking steps to mitigate the funding risk, the PMO needs to verify the reasonableness of IFF revenue estimations for FY07 and beyond, reassess the projected timeframe for self-sufficiency, and notify the appropriate officials that contingencies must be established since additional funding needs are probable.

Schedule

The PMO has faced challenges in supporting agencies to accomplish established milestones and timeframes. Agencies have experienced significant deployment schedule slippage, with at least eight of the 24 BRM agencies anticipating going beyond the FTR-mandated deadline for full deployment. Based on our review of the issue tracking log maintained and resolutions documented by the PMO, it appears that the PMO effectively managed the majority of the issues included on the log. Our review and analysis of customer agency issues tracked by the PMO disclosed six cases in which we question the PMO's effectiveness in managing and resolving these issues. Some of these issues surfaced between February and June 2005 and remain outstanding as of October 2005. This prolonged period of time has had an adverse impact on agencies' ability to remain on schedule. It is our opinion that the PMO should have exercised a more aggressive approach in obtaining a resolution.

One of the six issues pertains to disagreement over whether the ETS vendor or the agency is responsible for funding a particular functionality that part of the agency, which comprises 75% of the

agency's total travel, requires for full deployment. Per our discussion with the ETS Contracting Officer, although the requirement is unique and the ETS Master Contract states that an agency is responsible for paying for any requirement exceeding the minimum mandatory requirements outlined in the contract, the agency disagrees with this position. The PMO has been unsuccessful in facilitating a resolution to this issue that has been open since February 2005. As this issue may have an unfavorable impact on the timely deployment of ETS, we question the effectiveness of the PMO in managing this issue to a successful resolution. Furthermore, as per the PMO, an updated Memorandum of Understanding is required from an agency when material changes occur to the project schedule. In this case, an updated MOU was not submitted by the agency or requested by the PMO. See Appendix B-1 for detail on the other five issues. Working proactively as a liaison between the ETS vendor and customer agency may lead to timelier resolutions.

We found shortcomings in the PMO's methodology to estimate and substantiate deployment timeframes, possibly affecting the accuracy of key business decisions. We recognize that various factors contributed to individual agency deployment schedule slippage to include, to a certain extent, an aggressive project schedule that did not allow sufficient time for the effort required to implement a government-wide program of this magnitude. Some of the factors include:

- Several agencies experienced delays in awarding ETS task orders – almost half of the 24 BRM agencies awarded task orders at least three months past their planned award dates.
- Interface development issues posed a major challenge impacting deployment schedules. At least eight agencies experienced interface issues that delayed their original deployment dates.
- Many agencies wanted to upgrade their existing financial systems before starting ETS integration, thereby impacting ETS deployment start and completion dates. Instability in these new financial systems or accommodating new capabilities into the financial systems further attributed to deployment delays.
- Two ETS vendors are collectively handling 65% of the estimated annual travel vouchers processed for BRM agencies. One vendor postponed the release of a new ETS version, causing delays in subsequent agency user acceptance testing and impacting deployment schedules. The other vendor had severe contract and task order performance deficiencies, causing substantial deployment slippage across all its customers.

Although some of these challenges were unforeseeable or out of the PMO's control, we concluded that better planning and guidance of individual agency migration task and overall deployment timeframes may have helped to mitigate the impact of some delays to the deployment schedule. Each agency developed a project schedule and migration plan for the PMO to review and approve. One customer in our sample expressed concerns over the migration plan guidance provided by the PMO, stating that the agency made uneducated guesses in estimating migration task and deployment timeframes. Additionally, in a customer survey conducted by the PMO, two agencies commented that more guidance was needed from the PMO in estimating timeframes and the level of effort required for critical migration tasks.

In our opinion, the PMO review and approval process should include a method to verify that the time allotted for migration tasks and the overall deployment schedule is realistic and achievable. Inadequate planning of deployment timeframes has an effect on the accuracy of decisions such as agency voucher commitment levels, IFF revenue projections, and PMO funding and staffing levels. Lastly, our review revealed that a formal method for agencies to provide feedback about their satisfaction with the PMO support has not been implemented, possibly limiting the PMO's awareness of areas needing improvement.

Performance

The E-Gov Travel Initiative did not meet five of eight performance measures which have a direct adverse impact on meeting the President Management Agenda goal of reducing the costs of travel management and improving operating efficiencies. The five performance measures are discussed below:

- As mandated by the FTR, all 24 BRM agencies were required to issue an ETS task order by December 31, 2004. Five agencies did not issue a task order by the FTR deadline. Subsequent to the FTR date, four of the five agencies have issued a task order in FY05. One agency remains unsigned.
- The initiative did not meet its FY05 target of 15 BRM agencies using ETS. Eight of the 15 agencies did not start processing travel through the E-Gov Travel system during FY05.
- The initiative did not meet its FY05 target of 15 BRM agencies establishing interface agreements. Ten of the 15 agencies did not establish interface agreements during FY05.
- The initiative did not meet its 11.94% target of vouchers serviced through ETS. Recognizing that seven agencies were not processing their expected level of vouchers through the ETS and eight agencies were not using ETS as planned during FY05, the PMO significantly reduced and achieved their revised target.
- The initiative did not meet the target of an average user survey score of 4 in regards to customer satisfaction with ETS. A score of 4 on the 1 to 5 scale is equivalent to an 80 on a 1 to 100 ASCI scale applied on the user survey. One vendor achieved an average score of 37, one an average score of 31, and the third did not receive a score because of insufficient survey responses. The PMO informed us that this measure was suspended for FY05 because of challenges in implementing an effective survey tool.

For the E-Gov Travel Initiative to fully realize the cost savings associated with a fully deployed ETS and enable the PMO to progress toward being self-funded, performance measures must be met.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Acting Commissioner of the Federal Supply Service:

1. Develop realistic IFF revenue estimates with a contingency plan to address revenue shortfalls.
2. Identify opportunities for more proactive PMO involvement in issue resolution to minimize deployment slippage.
3. Create more customized guidance to help agencies develop reasonable deployment and migration task timeframes and develop a formal methodology to verify that these timeframes are achievable.
4. When an agency's risk of deployment slippage is determined to be high, an updated MOU should be completed by the agency allowing the PMO to make the necessary adjustments in their planning and budgeting decisions.
5. Implement a formal customer feedback mechanism to solicit information regarding customer satisfaction with PMO support.

Management Comments

Management generally concurs with the recommendations. See Appendix C for management's detailed response.

Internal Controls

As discussed in the Objectives, Scope, and Methodology section of this report, our audit objective focused on determining the effectiveness of the E-Gov Travel Program Management Office. Our audit did not include a review of internal controls.

We wish to thank you and your staff for the courtesies extended to the auditors during this review. Should you or your staff have any questions concerning this review, please contact me at (703) 603-0189.

CAROLYN PRESLEY-DOSS
Audit Manager
Acquisition Programs Audit Office (JA-A)

APPENDICES

**REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
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Business Reference Model (BRM) Agencies

	BRM Agency	ETS Vendor Selected
1	Department of State	CWGT
2	U.S. Agency for International Development	CWGT
3	Department of Labor	CWGT
4	Department of Interior	CWGT
5	General Services Administration	CWGT
6	Department of Education ¹	CWGT
7	Small Business Administration ²	CWGT
8	Nuclear Regulatory Commission ²	CWGT
9	Office of Personnel Management ²	CWGT
10	National Science Foundation	EDS
11	Department of Housing and Urban Development	EDS
12	Veterans Administration	EDS
13	Department of Homeland Security	EDS
14	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	EDS
15	Department of Commerce	EDS
16	Department of Justice	EDS
17	Department of Agriculture	EDS
18	Department of the Treasury	NGMS
19	Department of Transportation	NGMS
20	Department of Health and Human Services	NGMS
21	Environmental Protection Agency	NGMS
22	Department of Energy	NGMS
23	National Archives and Records Administration ²	NGMS
24	Social Security Administration ³	N/A

Source: Data obtained from E-Gov Travel Program Management Office website as of July 2005

¹ Per task order data on E-Gov Travel Program Management Office website as of November 2005, Department of Education has awarded an ETS vendor.

² Service provided by a cross-servicing agency.

³ Per task order data on E-Gov Travel Program Management Office website as of November 2005, Social Security Administration has not issued a task order for an ETS vendor.

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Critical Issues Identified by OIG from PMO's Issue Tracking Log

	Issue Description	Submission Date on Issue Tracking Log
1	Multiple agencies have raised an issue concerning the ability to book round trip airfares via one vendor's online booking engine. Roundtrip airfare functionality is a contractual requirement for the booking engine. Agencies have stated that ETS implementation is contingent upon improvements to the online booking engine that include resolution to the round trip fare issue.	March 2005
2	One agency has experienced routing status and interface capability problems with their ETS vendor's system. Specifically, the interface was not handling return to sender documents as specified in the agency's task order. The agency had indicated that deployment would be delayed until at least FY 2006. As of October 2005, the PMO was determining if a new system release had corrected the issue.	May 2005
3	Development and delivery of unique travel functionality for one agency has been delayed, adversely impacting the development of their financial system interface as well. The ETS vendor has slipped delivery dates on several occasions. This delay has affected deployment dates for several divisions within the agency, with full deployment going beyond the September 2006 FTR deadline.	May 2005
4	Lack of availability of city-pair airfares in the online booking engine impacted all customers of one ETS vendor. Although an update to the booking engine was expected to resolve the issue, a review of the online booking engine patch in September 2005 revealed that the issue had not been resolved. Agencies have stated that ETS implementation is contingent upon improvements to the online booking engine that include resolution to the city-pair airfare issue.	May 2005
5	One agency has experienced unsatisfactory performance of their ETS vendor's Travel Management Center (TMC) services, causing deployment to slip. The agency issued two letters of concern requesting that the ETS vendor correct this issue. Travelers within that agency have continued to experience incorrect billing of ticket prices and fees, ticket issuance problems, and unsatisfactory customer service.	June 2005

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FSS' Response to the Draft Report



GSA Federal Supply Service

FEB 27 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR EUGENE WASZILY
ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL
FOR AUDITING (JA)

FROM: G. MARTIN WAGNER 
ACTING COMMISSIONER (F) (FPP)

SUBJECT: GSA Draft Report, "Review of the Effectiveness of
the GSA E-Gov Travel Program Management
Office" (A050178), dated January 24, 2006

We have reviewed the subject report and concur with the report recommendations. Specific comments on the recommendations are provided in the attached statement.

We appreciate the collaborative way in which the auditors coordinated the draft report with the E-Gov Travel Program Management Office (PMO). They presented ample opportunity for the E-Gov Travel PMO to understand their emerging findings and contribute additional information for their consideration.

Attachment

cc:
Kenneth L. Crompton (JA-A)
Carolyn Presley-Doss (JA-A)

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Arlington, VA 20406-0003
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FSS' Response to the Draft Report

Comments on the GSA Draft Report on the
Review of the Effectiveness of the GSA E-Gov
Travel Program Management Office (A050178),
Dated January 24, 2006

General Comments:

The E-Gov Travel program is a government wide transformational initiative which impacts the majority of the Executive Branch agencies and will significantly change and automate the administrative processes supporting official Government travel. As such, the program has widespread interest. Key stakeholders include, but are not limited to, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the General Services Administration (GSA), as well as the Federal civilian agencies. Additionally, many of the key decisions and responsibilities concerning E-Gov Travel migrations are left to the discretion of individual agencies in their task orders with an E-Gov Travel Service (ETS) vendor.

Recommendation 1:

Develop realistic IFF revenue estimates with a contingency plan to address revenue shortfalls.

Comment:

Concur. Adjustment to the revenue projections was coordinated during the course of the budget discussions for fiscal year 2006 and development of the fiscal year OMB Exhibit 300. These adjustments and the corresponding impacts on the Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) revenue were briefed and coordinated with the key stakeholders listed above.

As additional clarity is achieved surrounding adjusted agency migration schedules, the E-Gov Travel PMO will make corresponding adjustments to IFF revenue estimates to align with the GSA performance and budget planning activities.

The E-Gov Travel PMO's original IFF revenue estimates were based on agency self-reporting and aggressive deadlines established during the design phase and driven by the President's Management Agenda (PMA). The initial program phase of voucher production (and resultant IFF revenue) was based on agency Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) signed prior to their selection of an ETS vendor. In the updated iteration of MOUs, the revised projected monthly voucher targets corresponded to deployment schedules mutually agreed upon between agencies and their ETS vendors. In reality, some agencies have not

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deployed according to the original migration schedules. In addition, some agencies have taken a risk adverse approach toward their migrations which has delayed significant deployment progress.

Towards the end of the audit review, two of the three ETS vendors were required by GSA to provide Corrective Action Plans (CAP) that address serious performance problems. One of the impacts of a CAP is the further delay of scheduled migrations. The full impact of this slippage will only be known once the CAP have been completed and customer agencies are able to renegotiate deployment schedules with their ETS vendors.

The renegotiated schedules will be documented in both updated MOUs between the E-Gov Travel PMO and the customer agencies and through revised voucher projection targets coordinated with the program's key stakeholders. The contingency plan is to make budgetary decisions based on adjusted IFF revenue projections through the regularly scheduled budget review.

Recommendation 2:

Identify opportunities for more proactive PMO involvement in issue resolution to minimize deployment slippage.

Comment:

We concur with the need to minimize deployment slippage. The E-Gov Travel PMO has addressed issue resolution through customer-centric mechanisms. The PMO has installed a specific process that identifies, prioritizes and measures agency issues ensuring communications and collaboration between customer agencies and their specific ETS vendors. This is supported by a technical solution, *Remedy*, which assigns responsibility to ensure the proper focus and resources are appropriately applied.

Secondly, the E-Gov Travel PMO has reorganized creating Integrated Project Teams (IPT). The IPTs are organized around each ETS vendor and their customer agencies. This allows for a more efficient identification and resolution of ETS vendor problems. This results in higher customer acceptance of vendor corrective actions and leads to better deployment decisions. This forum also provides critical feedback to the commercial vendor on specific areas where they must concentrate their efforts to target customer delivery needs.

Additionally, the PMO established Semi-Annual Performance Reviews (SAPR) and Monthly Status Reports (MSR) as functional program elements to track vendor performance against their Service Level Agreements (SLA) and with their customers.

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Recommendation 3:

Create more customized guidance to help agencies develop reasonable deployment and migration task timeframes and develop a formal methodology to verify that these timeframes are achievable.

Comment:

Concur. The success of ETS migration is primarily based on ETS vendor performance and customer agency commitment. As consultants to our customer agencies, the E-Gov PMO will provide our experience-based lessons learned along with commercial best practices to assist and advise customer agencies in developing their migration timeframes and milestones. As the managing partner for the Government, the E-Gov PMO will monitor and report on ETS vendor performance against agency milestones. Vendor shortfalls will be identified and gaps in performance will be managed.

The E-Gov Travel PMO works collaboratively with the customer agencies; however, ultimately the migration decision and authority are left to the resourcing decisions made by the agency management. The E-Gov Travel PMO will add anticipated timelines to the migration template for agencies to use in developing their revised migration schedules. Factors impacting agency deployment are often out of the control of the E-Gov Travel PMO.

The E-Gov Travel PMO tracks their changes through the IPT process and documents the agency decisions using updates to the GSA/Agency MOUs. The updates are coordinated with GSA's Office of Governmentwide Policy and OMB using weekly, monthly, and quarterly scorecards.

Recommendation 4:

When an agency's risk of deployment slippage is determined to be high, an updated MOU should be completed by the agency allowing the PMO to make the necessary adjustments in their planning and budgeting decisions.

Comment:

Concur. The current MOUs between the Business Reference Model (BRM) agencies and the E-Gov Travel PMO are updated as frequently as monthly based on the individual situation between the ETS vendor and their customer agency. The slippage due to two of the three ETS vendors being under CAP has been determined to be a reasonable risk by the program stakeholders and customer agencies. The final steps in the CAP will include establishing new

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migration targets. This will be documented in updated MOUs with affected agencies and provide significant input to GSA budgeting projections. As these factors become more certain, the results will be coordinated with the Federal Acquisition Service, GSA, and OMB.

Recommendation 5:

Implement a formal customer feedback mechanism to solicit information regarding customer satisfaction with PMO support.

Comment:

Concur. The E-Gov Travel PMO is establishing a more formal means to garner feedback from customer agencies. Initial efforts will involve interviewing key agency decision makers involved in the migration of ETS within their agencies. The E-Gov Travel PMO is also looking for other opportunities to leverage institutionalized GSA feedback mechanisms for customer feedback.

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